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Published to advance the Science of cold-blooded vertebrates

NOTES ON FISHES AT ORIENT, LONG ISLAND,
IN 1917.

Petromyzon marinus. A small sea lamprey, 121 mm. long, was taken on November 19. It had the adult form and might readily have been mistaken for the brook lamprey, but has been compared at the American Museum, and there can be no doubt of the identification. Another was taken on November 27.

Sphyrna zygaena. One 22 inches in total length taken in the Sound on November 22.

Mustelus canis. The following data was recorded on a specimen taken June 6: 54 inches in total length; weight, 21 pounds. It gave birth to young 14 inches in length on land an hour after capture.

Squalus acanthias. The last adult was taken on June 7, 34 inches in total length. First taken in the fall, October 5, one 35 inches. There occurred a remarkable run of the young from July 2 to 16, when daily catches were recorded of 6 to 75 individuals, these ranging in length from 10 to 16 inches. Many of the youngest had yolk sac attached, birth apparently being but a few hours off. However, no adults were taken during this period, and in 20 years of trap fishing in Orient waters no young of this species have previously been obtained in July. Occurring at this time, also, were unusual numbers of Whiting, *Merluccius bilinearis*, Bunker, *Brevoortia tyrannus* and young of the Hickory Shad, *Pomolobus mediocris*. The stomachs of the young Spined Dogfish contained Whiting, and Common Herring, *Clupea harengus*, this last species being exceedingly abundant at that time.

Leptocephalus conger. One, May 23, 15 inches in total length. The local name is "Sea-eel."

Elops saurus. One taken October 19, 13½ inches in total length.

Etrumeus sadina. There was a very heavy run from November 17 to 27.

Pomolobus aestivalis. This herring, usually rare at Orient, was present from July 20 to mid-August in large numbers. Specimens taken early in August were 4 to 6 inches in total length. The first one was taken June 20 and the last December 4.

Brevoortia tyrannus. A remarkable occurrence of young Menhaden was of exceptional interest during the summer of 1917. The oldest living fishermen cannot recall a similar occurrence. They appeared on July 1, when several hundred specimens from 2 to 3 inches in length were taken. Between July 20 and August 15 several bushels, about 4 inches in length, were taken daily. The last part of August and most of September, although present, they were not common. The latter end of September they arrived in great abundance in the southward migration and continued in increasing numbers till the 26th of October, when the maximum of abundance was reached. On that day a bushel was counted and the number taken in one trap was 200,000 fish from 3 to 5 inches in length. At the present war-time prices of all phosphates, this material was utilized on the farms to timely advantage. Adults of this species were very rare throughout the entire season.

Anchoviella argyrophana. One taken November 23, 6¼ inches in total length. Was with a large school of Round Herring, *Etrumeus*.

Tylosurus marinus. First taken May 28, one 19 inches in total length.

Hyporhamphus roberti. First taken June 27, one 6 inches in total length.

Scomberesox saurus. Seven were taken in Long Beach Bay on September 27, 10¼ inches in total length. Another, November 2, in the Sound, 11½ inches.

Polydactylus octonemus. One taken July 23 in the Sound, 10 inches in total length.

Scomber scombrus. First taken May 10, three, 8 inches in total length.

Sarda sarda. One taken November 6, 11¼ inches in total length.

Scomberomorus regalis. One taken October 2, 26 inches in total length and another September 23, 26 inches in length, both from Sound.

Seriola zonata. One taken in the Sound, November 12, 14½ inches in total length; 5 inches deep; weight, 1¾ pounds. Color, bluish-gray below, shading to purple upward; unbanded; golden above from head to dorsal, with a black stripe from eye to first dorsal fin.

Decapturus punctatus. One, November 20, 5¼ inches in total length. A late date.

Trachurops crumenophthalmus. One ($6\frac{1}{2}$ inches total), taken November 13, in Sound, a late date.

Caranx crysos. Taken November 4 in Sound, a late date, ($7\frac{1}{4}$ inches in total length); another, 6 inches in length was taken on October 23. All species of jack-fishes were more common than usual the summer of 1917. It is the first time that we have taken this form in several years.

Poronotus triacanthus. First taken May 11, seven, 5 to 6 inches in total length.

Myoxocephalus aeneus. One ($2\frac{1}{4}$ inches total), July 30, Sound.

Myoxocephalus mitchilli. May 19, one 4 inches in length, latest record.

Myoxocephalus octodecimspinosus. Common through June, on the 20th of that month at least 1,000 were taken in the traps in the Sound, all adults.

Cyclopterus lumpus. On May 9 a specimen with the following measurements was taken in the Sound: 23 inches in total length; 11 inches in depth; $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth; head, 5 inches in length; mouth, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide; weight, $13\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. Color, greenish-black, shading to greenish-yellow below. On May 22, one 12 inches in length was taken of a bluish-green color. On December 13, one $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches was taken, yellowish-brown in color.

Prionotus carolinus. First taken May 10 (three adults). An immature specimen of $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches was taken on May 16, the young are rare in Orient waters in spring. A specimen was taken on May 23 with length 16 inches (total); weight, $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds.

Prionotus strigatus. Taken May 4, an early date. Last taken November 4, young, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Cephalacanthus volitans. One, October 19, 4 inches in total length.

Pholis gunnellus. One taken June 2, 5 inches in length. Latest Orient date.

Merluccius bilinearis. Frequent throughout the summer, unusually so, occasionally abundant in July and August. On July 13, 200 were taken in one trap ranging in size from 6 to 20 inches.

Gadus callarias. One was taken on May 11, 22 inches in total length; another on May 21, 12 inches in length.

Paralichthys oblongus. This is called "plaice" by the fishers here. It is not common from May to November. However, it may be taken, two or three in numbers almost daily during the last part of the summer. A specimen 12 inches long taken May 18, sent to the American Museum, lacked the customary spots.

Lophopsetta maculata. This species is called "sole" locally. It is shipped to Fulton market very early in the season and to quite a considerable extent through April, but later becomes too cheap in the market to pay the fishers to ship them in. I have always considered this a very sweet meated fish, and I usually pick one out for myself in place of the winter flounder. However, locally it is considered a very poor fish and seldom used. One taken in the Bay, March 1, is an early date. Several young, 1 to 2 inches long were taken on December 15 to 17 in the Sound.

Lophius piscatorius. Six adults were taken in the Sound on June 16.

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TESTING FOLK-LORE BY OBSERVATIONS ON BUTLER'S GARTER SNAKE.¹

It sometimes falls to the lot of the naturalist, after many fruitless periods of watching the animals he is studying, to be rewarded by being on hand at the opportune time to observe most unusual occurrences among his subjects. Such an occasion recently presented itself in the little building where for several seasons I have kept certain reptiles under observation. The experiment which I am about to discuss has a bearing upon the oft-raised question as to whether or not individuals among the viviparous snakes ever swallow their young.

If the mother snake of certain species ever does swallow her newly-born young, as popular superstition affirms, it must be that she does it for one of several reasons. One of the explanations offered for such a contra-physiological act is that it is an expedient resorted to for the protection of the offspring in the face of danger. Another suggestion is that the young are swallowed through error in the identification of food.² It hardly need be said that neither

¹ Paper prepared for Third Meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Cambridge, 1917.

² A case in point is reported by Ditmars. The Reptile Book, p. 375, where he discovered that a female of *Cemophora coccinea* had swallowed her eggs after partial incubation. It is assumed that she mistook them through memory error for the eggs of some other reptile.